

MARCH 8, 1978

CHINA'S FIFTH PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

ANNCR:

CHINA'S FIFTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS IS NOW HISTORY. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOSEPH SULLIVAN FOLLOWED THE PROCEEDINGS AND HAS DETAILS IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

THE EIGHT-DAY MEETING OF CHINA'S PARLIAMENT CONCLUDED WITH AN EMPHASIS ON UNITY IN A NEW "LONG MARCH" TO MAKE CHINA A POWERFUL AND MODERN COUNTRY BY THE END OF THE CENTURY. AS NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESSES GO, THE MEETING WAS UNIQUE IN CERTAIN PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECTS. FOR ONE, IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A CONGRESS WAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED BEFORE IT GOT UNDERWAY. NONETHELESS, THE FIFTH CONGRESS MET TO FULFILL THE SAME FUNCTIONS AS ITS PREDECESSORS -- THAT IS, TO RATIFY A COMMON NATIONAL PROGRAM AND TO GIVE A SEAL OF APPROVAL TO THE LEADERSHIP GROUP SELECTED TO IMPLEMENT THAT PROGRAM.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS BY PARTY CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG IS INDEED AMBITIOUS AND CONTAINS APPROACHES WHICH CONTRAST WITH THOSE ADVOCATED BY THE LATE MAO TSE-TUNG. ABOVE ALL, THE PROGRAM CALLS FOR ORDER AND INCREASED PARTY DISCIPLINE AS WELL AS RECOGNITION OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE OVER IDEOLOGICAL PURITY. THERE'S ALSO A STRONG COMMITMENT TO RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING NEW EFFORTS TO USE THE SKILLS AND THINKING OF CHINA'S INTELLECTUALS AND TO IMPROVE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PROGRAM CALLS FOR BETTER LIVING STANDARDS FOR THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND A MORE SATISFYING CULTURAL LIFE.

HUA KUO-FENG -- IN RETAINING HIS POSITION AS PREMIER -- STANDS FIRMLY AS THE NATION'S TOP OFFICIAL IN THE PARTY AS WELL

AS IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE POST OF HEAD OF STATE -- WHICH WAS ABOLISHED IN THE LATE 1960'S -- WAS NOT REVIVED AS SOME HAD EXPECTED. AND, DESPITE SOME NEW FACES IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, THE AGE LEVEL OF THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP REMAINS VERY HIGH. THE EMPHASIS IS STILL ON TIME-TESTED, VETERAN POLITICIANS.

THE LACK OF ANY CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF TEN HSIAO-PING -- THE FIRST DEPUTY PREMIER AND THIRD-RANKING MEMBER OF THE PARTY -- WAS ONE OF THE FEW SURPRISES TO COME OUT OF THE CONGRESS. BUT TENG'S INFLUENCE WAS NEVERTHELESS APPARENT IN THE PROCEEDINGS. BOTH THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE NEW TEN-YEAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFLECT HIS VIEWS ON RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH OVER IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS. AND THE NEW SLATE OF CABINET (STATE COUNCIL) MINISTERS IS HEAVILY WEIGHTED WITH PEOPLE IDENTIFIED WITH TANG'S POLITICAL VIEWS.

PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF CHINA'S FUTURE IS THE FACT THAT THE CONGRESS GAVE ITS APPROVAL TO THE MODERATE COURSE FOLLOWED BY HUA KUO-FENG SINCE MAO'S PASSING. THE DISRUPTIVE CULTURAL REVOLUTION LAUNCHED BY MAO IN THE MID-1960'S, HUA TOLD THE CONGRESS, ENDED LAST YEAR WITH THE ARREST OF THE SO-CALLED "GANG OF FOUR" RADICALS. AS MAO'S SUCCESSOR, HE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE MAOIST LEGACY IN CHINA'S POLITICAL LIFE IS NOT ABOUT TO BE REJECTED OUTRIGHT. BUT, AS "NEW YORK TIMES" CORRESPONDENT FOX BUTTERFIELD WRITES FROM HONG KONG, CHINA'S NEW LEADERS SEEM TO HAVE BEGUN TO FASHION A MORE CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY TO FIT THEIR PLANS FOR THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE.